5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

727 floor of the village president's cottage with a great fire burning at our
346 feet. The parish priest had been awaiting us in the square, and after I
had photographed the ruins of the church he rang the great bell which
[123] hung from the branches of a plane tree and the whole community
[796] gathered to sing the first vespers of the feast of St. Athanasius the Great,
in a chapel which had been disused for generations and had only been repaired since the return of the refugees the previous autumn. No more than forty families had as yet found their way back to the village and the destruction was very great. The next morning it was raining heavily and the mud lay so deep in the tiny chapel that planks had to be laid down to facilitate the movements of the celebrant.

727 Papa Georgios Papageorgiou was himself a native of Chrysomelia.
793 He had been ordained in the early days of the war after living for a
time in the monastery of St. Stephen on the windy heights above
[346] Kalambaka. His first parish had been wiped out of existence by the
Germans, and now the Lord Cherubim, Metropolitan of Trikka and Staghi, had sent him to this ruined hamlet, deep in the folds of Pindos.
[342] He lived with his 'priestess' and their four children in a wretched hovel roofed with corrugated iron a little way below the church and, in the absence of a schoolmaster, was himself acting as a temporary
727 *didaskalos*.

346 We spent a night at the village of Vanakoulia on our way back to
[872] Kalambaka. When we arrived the whole population seemed to be engaged in the task of setting up a school in the narthex of the church:
[211] a severe structure only lately completed. Over the doorway was set a
[457] rough inscription in rustic Greek commemorating the destruction of the church by the Germans and its subsequent rebuilding by the inhabitants—aided, as we later discovered, by generous gifts from relatives in America.

DESTROYED BY GERMANS

1943

REBUILT

AT THE EXPENSE OF THE INHABITANTS

JUNE 1949

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About eighty of the 200-odd houses in the village had been destroyed. The old school-house was a total ruin and would have, in due course, to be rebuilt from its very foundations. The church of St. Menas had been reopened, and the desks and benches which had arrived a few days earlier had been stacked in the narthex. There was tremendous excitement in the village at the prospect of the reopening of the school. The schoolmaster, who was directing operations when we arrived, had just been released from the army. He proved to be the son of the proprietor of the largest store in Kalambaka. Needless to say, the unexpected advent of the *xenoi* caused all work to be abandoned for the afternoon, and half the village accompanied us to the church. The priest, a young man named Antony, was in a sanatorium near Athens. For the time being his place had been taken by a refugee *papas* from the diocese of Grevena.

[872] 875 123 [793]

The evening brought torrents of rain. We slept at the house of one of the churchwardens and set out for Kalambaka the following morning. The *epitropoi* insisted on accompanying us as far as the river, as they feared lest the Peneios, swollen by the heavy rains, should prove difficult to ford. Fortunately, their anxieties were excessive, and shortly after midday on the feast of St. Euthymius the Great we rode briskly into Kalambaka. My mule, smarting under a sense of outraged propriety at its Frankish rider's use of an umbrella (borrowed from the village president at Vanakoulia) as an instrument of coercion, eyed the

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/8 cont./

Since the refugees settled the village changed its external and internal appearance. The pond in the center of the village was filled up with 1400 cubic meters of dirt. It was fenced and a war memorial monument was erected in the center of it. Many shrubs were planted /9/ and the acacia trees surround the whole park. Once a bathing spot for the lazy buffalo, it has become now a rendezvous place for the youth of the village. The refugees were not satisfied with the well water and through personal work brought running water to the village from the nearby hills. A large fountain was built in the square of the village and two more smaller ones in the neighborhoods. As soon as the water came to the village, at the inauguration ceremony, the village changed its name from Armoutchi (Pear bearing) to Megali Vrisi (Big Fountain).

Many of the Turkish houses were torn down and new houses with better roads and aesthetic appearance were put up. The whole village is covered with huge elm trees. The South Western part is occupied by the Thracians and the North by the Caucasians.

The Thracians are the only refugees who changed their homes for four times in less than 10 years and this last one may be the fifth. They are so discouraged in building big houses and leaving them every time to the enemy to destroy them that they all decided to erect one room houses with mud walls and ceiling made out of reeds. The cost of the material does not exceed more than $18 to $25. One of them once told me, "I left enough big houses to the enemy who destroyed them. This time I am going to destroy it before he comes in." When I laughed /10/ at his last remark, he shook his head and said. "You are too young yet to know the Balkans." No, I think he was right. Every Thracian family can carry everything they have on their backs. They simplified their lives, having only those things that are the most essential.

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